

All in the Cards

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Category: La Femme Nikita
Genre: Romance
Language: English
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2000-02-03 09:00:00
Updated: 2000-02-03 09:00:00
Packaged: 2016-04-27 13:08:32
Rating: T
Chapters: 1
Words: 5,566
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: A chance tarrot reading shows Nikita her future.

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> <meta name="Generator"> Disclaimer: As usual, I'm really hyper when I'm writing this

Disclaimer: As usual, I'm really hyper when I'm writing this! Let's just get the boring part of this thing out of the way. I don't own Nikita, Michael (damn), Walter, Operations, Madeline, Adam, or Birkoff. Actually, I stole a little bit of the storyline, too. The conversations with Madeline and the ending are parts of a LFN episode that I took and twisted to my own advantage. I was watching La Femme Nikita the other day (and drooling over Roy Dupis) and I was just wondering. Do I have to write disclaimers for EVERY story, or would it be okay just to have one disclaimer say everything? For those of you who have read and enjoyed all of my other stories, I have a trademark hidden in each of my disclaimers, and I figure I might as well do it now. I'm sitting here on the phone with my best friend, talking about using him as a character in my next story. Do you think that Pita Wilson or Roy Dupis or any of the other LFN cast ever read these stories that we write? If they do, I feel sorry for Roy Dupis, the way I go on and on about him! But you have to admit, he is SUCH a hottie!!!! (The guy who plays Birkoff isn't bad looking either!)

Author's Note: Well, I haven't posted a story in forever. Actually, I was having some trouble with my computer. It wouldn't upload stories! Anyway, this one took me forever b/c I worked on it off and on, but I finally finished it, so enjoy!

It's All In The Cards

by Mara

There was something about the old woman that Nikita just couldn't say

no to. Maybe it was the intensity with which she begged.

She had never really believed in the power of tarrot cards, but when the old woman approached her, Nikita didn't see any harm in humouring her. Actually, Nikita had never see a tarrot reading done, much less had one done FOR her.

Entering the tent, Nikita took the chair closest to the exit.

"My dear, I want you to ask the cards a question." Her eyes got large and ominous. "DON'T tell me what your question is, but I must know the subject. Does it relate to lovers?" Nikita closed her eyes. Her question was stupid and foolish, she knew, but she asked it anyway. Opening her eyes and looking calmly into the other woman's, she seemed to hear the question for the first time.

"Is your question about your lover?"

"Yes, lovers." Nikita handed the cards back. Searching through the deck, Madame Zora, as she asked to be called, pulled out a single card. It displayed two women, lovers, as Nikita immediately observed, and the words below confirmed it. The older woman handed her the cards, instructing Nikita to shuffle them. On the table between them, there was a piece of cloth, made of black slik.

"Now pick three cards from the deck and set them in front of you. Don't pick just ANY cards, pick the ones that FEEL right." Though it sounded awfully bizarre to her, Nikita did as she was told. Amazingly enough, the three cards she picked did feel "right" to her. Madame Zora reached a wrinkled hand out to Nikita and she obligingly put the deck in it.

"Tree of Life, or Guilded cross?"

"Oh, I don't know anything about tarrot." The woman gave her a disapproving stare. Embarrassed, Nikita's voice became quiet. "Guilded cross, I guess."

As the older woman flipped over the cards from the deck and put them in the shape of a cross, she was unaware of Nikita's scrutiny. The tattered turban sat askew upon Madame Zora's head, while her robe, equally worn, was draped over her like a protective aura. She made the perfect psychic.

In the middle of the cloth, vertically facing the older woman was the lovers card. The next card went horizontally across the focus card. It was a six of swords. The third card went right above the focus card, representing the element of mind. It was a two of cups. The body card, placed just to the right of the focus card, Madame Zora's right, was a two of swords. Next came the heart card, just to the left of the lovers. It was a four of wands. Below the lovers, was the soul card; an ace of cups.

"Oh my. I've never seen someone so lucky in love. All your cards are facing up, they're facing towards me, which is a very good sign." Madame Zora continued to explain each card individually, pointing as she did so. "And they're all divisable by two, which is VERY symbolic with lovers. You'll never have trouble getting men, when you want them."

"You see this six of swords, layed across your focus card? The suit of swords is said to be a BAD suit, but that's not entirely true. This is a defensive card, and the way it's positioned, facing the four of wands, means that you are fighting yourself. There's an inner battle going on inside of you, and somehow, your heart is involved. Your inner battle is driving away the one you love.

"The two of swords over here means you have balance. The ace of cups means that you often think with your heart, instead of your head. That's your general reading, but then, there are your specifics."

She layed three cards face down, vertically, on the edge of the cloth just to the left of the four of wands. Flipping them over, one at a time, she explained that the top one was heart, the middle one was body, and the bottom one was soul.

"They tell me that someone controls your heart. In essence, he's your king. No matter who you are with, he is always there, and you would do anything for him. You love him more than anything. But you aren't happy with the way things are."

Pointing to each of the cards in front of Nikita, she pointed to the corresponding elements.

"Flip over your heart card." Her eyes widened in surprise. "Very interesting. The four of Pentacles. Flip over the other two." Her eyes glided over the last two cards flipped. "And still, these are all even numbers. The cards say that you are not happy with the way things are, but you have a choice. You can take what you want, or you can leave things the way they are. If you take the chance, you will get what you want and be blissfully happy, but it will not last. Your happiness will not excede four months. Do you have any questions?"

Nikita looked at all the cards and let the woman's words sink in. "Can you see who the man is? Can you tell me anything else about him?"

"Well, he's young. In his twenties or younger. And he has brown hair. He's the one you're meant to be with."

"I see. Thank you very much." Nikita reached into the pocket of her tight-fitting black leather pants and handed the woman twenty dollars. It was a bit much for the tarrot reading, but she wanted to help the woman. In her soul, she felt the woman had helped HER somehow.

"You're welcome child. I hope you have learned something about yourself."

"I have. Thank you."

Even hours later, after she had gone on about her normal day, Nikita couldn't forget the strange old woman's predictions. Was there really something special about the cards, or did a crazy old woman happen to get lucky?

Nikita sighed out of irritation and threw herself on her couch.
~Okay, so maybe she's partially right. I mean, Michael isn't the ONLY man in my life. And he CERTAINLY doesn't control my heart. Actually, when you think about it, she was toally off the mark.~ Though she had seemingly settled the matter of the tarrot reading in her mind, that was only an illusion. No one can lie to themselves forever. It was at that moment, as luck would have it, that her phone rang, saving Nikita from more of the self-analyzation that would inevitably drive her out of her mind.

"Yes?" Nikita couldn't keep the strain from her voice, but it didn't really matter.

A familliar voice on the other end was calling her to work.
"Josephine."

"Yes, I understand." There was a click and Nikita closed her phone, put on the black suede jacket that had been carelessly tossed onto the back of a chair, and made for the door. As she opened it, a familliar and not-so-welcome face stood in her path.

Mick's face lit up and his smile was directed at Nikita. "Hey, Dollface! I was just comin' to see you!"

"Not now, Mick." As usual, he didn't seem to catch the annoyance in her tone of voice or facial expression.

"Hey, I was just wondering if you could do be a favor. See, I have this bird over there," he said, gesturing to his apartment, "and she's into the more kinky side of things. We were just wondering if you'd like to join us for a few...games."

Her eyes shot daggers. "No thanks. I have a few things to take care of right now."

"Ahh, playing secretagent woman again I see. Well, maybe when you're done, you'd like to have some FUN with us." He raised his eyes brows suggestively and it was all Nikita could do not to rip then off of his face.

"No thanks, Mick. I really have to go," she said as she walked away.

"Just think about it Dollface," he called after her.

"What's up, Michael?" Nikita asked, walking up to Michael where he was leaning over Birkoff's shoulder.

"We're going out tonight. There's a briefing in ten minutes."

"Okay." Having had her questions answered and having been brushed off as usual, Nikita headed for the briefing room. There she found two other operatives were already waiting, so she took her customary seat at the very center of the table and sat to wait with them.

For ten minutes, Nikita played with her watch, twisted her hair around her fingers, and tugged at her jacket. It seemed a lifetime before two other field ops, Birkoff, and Michael entered the room. Michael took HIS customary seat at Nikita's right, and Birkoff sat all the way to her left. Operations walked in a moment later and pushed a button on his remote control.

"This is Oleff Candary, he works with Red Cell. He's been known to supply them with information from time to time. Actually, it seems that he had some connections inside Section. He's Red Cell's leading source of information concerning us, and we feel that he's become a bit too irritating to be left alone.

"He has a fetish for blondes, so Nikita, you'll be taking the point position. Birkoff, continue."

"The location is a night club in central Belgrade. Intell indicates that he'll probably be in a private room with no more than four bodyguards."

"Michael, you'll pose as Nikita's boyfriend. The two of you will enter the club, dance for a while, and that's when he'll ask to see Nikita. Michael, put up a little resistance, but eventually give in." Operations was giving out orders as smoothly as ever.

"I thought you said he'd be in a private room," Nikita reminded him.

Operations' face took on the look it always did when Nikita interrupted a briefing with what he thought was a pointless question. "He will be, but there are cameras all over the club, and when he sees a girl he wants, he has one of his bodyguards go get her. Any MORE questions?" The look he shot Nikita was one of annoyance, which she pointedly ignored. "Good. You leave in one hour."

Nikita went immediately to get her comm unit and weapon.

"Hi, Sugar."

"Hey, Walter." The man's face was positively glowing. "Have a good date with Veronica last night?"

"Aww, it was great. Here's your comm unit, Sugar. Your weapon's over on the table there. Good luck."

"Thanks, Walter." She picked up the small gun, gave him a small smile and went to lay down before it was time to go out.

Nikita entered the dance club in a tight black tube dress and knee-high black boots with Michael leading her by the hand. Hidden in the inside of her left boot was a small pistol for later. He led her immediately to the edge of the dance floor and began swaying gently to the music as he pulled her close.

"We're in," Michael told Brikoff.

"Okay. Just keep dancing. Dance for as long as you have to. He'll

come and get her eventually. We want him alive, okay Nikita?"

"Okay." She closed her eyes as Michael's left hand rested on the bare skin of her back, just above her dress, while his right slid up and down her back, carressing it slowly. It was enough to forget the mission altogether. She lowered her head to let her right cheek rest on his shoulder, and in turn, he leaned his right cheek against her head, smelling her hair as he closed his eyes.

One song turned into two and two into three, as the minutes drifted by, but when a very large man approached them, it seemed to Nikita that their dances had lasted mere seconds.

"Excuse me," he apologized, "but there's a gentleman that would like to see you, Miss."

"Okay, Nikita, this is it. He'll take you to a room in the back. There are three hostiles, including the one you're with now. Michael will follow you, and once you've disposed of them, he'll take Canadary."

"I'm sorry, maybe later. We're sort of busy at the moment," Michael resisted. His hesitations at letting Nikita go had very little to do with the instructions Operations had given him.

"Mister Canadary would like to see the lady NOW." The bully turned to Nikita. "If you'll come with me please."

Michael opened his mouth to protest again, but Nikita cut him off. "It's okay, sweetheart. I'll be right back, Why don't you get me a drink."

"Alright." Michael walked over to the bar and ordered a drink as Nikita and the hired henchman disappeared down a crowded hallway. After taking a sip of his martinee, Michael headed in the direction Nikita had gone.

"It's the last door on the right, Michael. You'll have to take out the man at the door first. You can get the two inside once you're there." Birkoff's instructions were correct. With one shot the guard at the door was dead, and Michael was in the door.

"Hey, wait a-" the first guard's inquiries were cut off as he fell to the floor with a bullet in his skull. The second one attempted to draw a gun, but was stopped in the same manner as his partners.

"What's the meaning of this?" Canadary demanded. From where Nikita was straddled on his lap, she drew her own gun.

"Shut up. Don't resist and we won't have to hurt you."

The six operatives filed off the transport. Contrary to the usual, where everyone was debriefed, Operations had decided it would be singles, and as team leader, Michael had chosen himself and three operatives OTHER than Nikita. She was the last one off, and wasn't

all that surprised when Michael grabbed her arm and pulled her aside, as he seemed to be so fond to doing.

"Nikita. I was wondering if you'd like to have dinner tonight."

"Um, sure. Where would you like to go?" Michael asking her to dinner was a bit of a surprise, though not a total shock.

"I was thinking I could cook for you, at your place." Now THAT was a shock.

"I didn't know you COULD cook. That's sounds nice. Okay, how about eleven o'clock?"

"Okay. I'll see you at eleven." Then, as if they had been discussing strategies or something of that nature, Michael turned around and went to debrief. Rolling her eyes, Nikita started in the other direction to check in her com unit and weapon.

At 11:23 there was a knock at the door. Approaching the surveillance camera next to the door, Nikita immediately recognized the visitor as Michael. She opened the door and her eyes widened a little in surprise.

"I'm sorry I'm late. I had to get a few things for dinner."

"Oh, that's okay. Come in." Nikita pushed the door open wider and took one of the two shopping bags from Michael's arms. After he'd come through the doorway, she kicked the door closed with her right foot and set the shopping bag on the island in her kitchen. When Michael began taking things out of the bag and setting them on the counter, Nikita did the same.

"How are you?" Michael asked.

"Oh, I'm fine. Same as always, I guess." Her smile, for once, wasn't forced or phony.

"Just, fine?" He asked of her again, taking two steps that brought him within kissing distance of her neck. Slowly he leaned in and breathed on it, just a little, causing Nikita to drop the bag of potatoes she was holding. Michael gave a small smile that she couldn't see and turned around to make dinner.

~It's just like him to do that to me,~ Nikita thought irritably.

"Well, uh, what can I do to help?" She asked, shrugging off the negative thoughts she'd just been thinking.

"Pour some wine. There's some in the bag over there." Michael's voice was calm and composed, from where he stood in front of the stove.

"Okay. Wine." She said, a little nervously. He bent down to get a pot from under the counter and she was right next to him, reaching up to get two wine glasses from the cabinet. As he was coming up her arms

were coming down and accidentally went around his neck. "Oh, I'm sorry. I was just getting some glasses." Nikita blushed a little and was partially relieved and partially annoyed by the knock on the door. "I'd better get that." That said, she started to turn around and set the wine glasses on the counter, but Michael got to her first. He kissed her lips once, and backed off. ~He's toying with me again,~ she thought as she set the glasses down and turned towards the door.

Once again, Nikita had an unwelcome visitor. She had opened the door just enough for her body to block everything in her apartment.

"Dollface! I wasn't sure you were home yet!" Mick said with a smile.

"What do you want Mick?" Nikita tried to be polite, though she just wanted the man to go away.

"Have you given any more thought to my proposal?" He asked hopefully.

"No, Mick. The answer is no."

"How're you and Michael?" He piped up as she began to close the door in his face. That question was not an unusual one, but to have him ask it while Michael was in her apartment was almost embarrassing. "Oh, hello Michael." Startled, Nikita looked over her shoulder to see Michael's face and feel his hands go around her waist.

"We're fine, Mick. Now, if you'll excuse us, you've interrupted something."

Mick didn't try to argue when Michael closed the door. Infact, he just stood there with an amused grin on his face.

"Are you sure that was such a good idea? I mean, you're leading him to think things-"

"Let him think whatever he wants. You and I will know what happens. Anything he says to anyone will be his own conclusions." Michael stood there for another moment and then returned to his meal-in-progress.

"Okay. If you say so." As she often did, Nikita deferred to Michael, even though she didn't fully agree with him.

"I do," was all he said. Rolling her eyes once more, Nikita took the wine from the bag and opened a drawer. It took a few seconds of rumaging through it to find a corkscrew. Opening the bottle, she poured two glasses of red wine into the crystal wine glasses she had retrieved from her cabinet a few minutes before.

"Here you go," she said as she handed him one of the glasses. Her heart stopped as their hands touched for a few brief moments, but she snapped out of her silent daydreaming when he finally took the glass. "Anything else I can do?"

"No. Why don't you put on some music?"

"Okay." She said, still trying to breathe normally. Crossing the room to her stereo, she bent, pressed a few buttons and soft music began to fill the room. Straightening, she turned around only to find Michael standing in front of her. He took her right hand and led her out into the middle of her apartment, just as he had done in the night club only hours before.

Pulling her to him once more, Michael began to dance with Nikita. It was a dance of seduction and games, meant to throw her off her guard. And it had worked. He kissed her neck, once...twice...three times. He kissed the corner of her mouth, teasing her almost, then kissed her full on the lips again. After a few more passionate kisses, Nikita pulled away. Michael closed the distance between them and took her up in his arms again.

"What's wrong?" he asked her.

"It's nothing..." she trailed off. ~Should i tell him what the woman said? Would he just think I was crazy?~ As if Michael had read her mind somehow, he led her over to the couch, sat down, and pulled her down as well.

Still holding her fragile-looking hand in his larger one, he asked what was bothering her again. "Something's upsetting you. Why don't we talk about it?" Nikita was genuinely surprised that Michael was trying to talk to her about what was on her mind.

"Do you believe in tarrot, Michael?" The question must have caught him off guard, though he showed no outward signs of it.

"In some cases. Why?" Though he must have been trying hard to seem as neutral as ever, Michael was obviously interested.

"Well, I was walking down a street earlier today, and this old woman asked if she could give me a tarrot reading. I wouldn't have said no, but she seemed so eager, so I agreed to let her." Nikita's face twisted with a mixture of confusion and embarrassment.

"She didn't tell you what you wanted to hear?" Michael was trying to rationalize the situation again, but there was nothing rational about what was happening inside Nikita's head.

"It's not that. I asked a stupid question- one that I thought I already knew the answer to...but the things she told me weren't what I had thought...and now I'm beginning to wonder who's right...am I making ANY sense at all?" She sighed as though the situation were hopeless.

"Yes. She told you things that went against all your previous beliefs on the situation. And now you're beginning to question your own answers."

"Exactly. I know that love is a difficult area to be clear in, but I honestly thought I had things figured out. But then this woman comes along, tells me something completely different, and things seem to be agreeing with HER."

"Calm down. It's okay. Why don't we go see her in the morning...we can clear this all up then if you'd like."

"We? You want to go with me?" Nikita felt bad for looking as surprised at his offer as she knew she must.

"Of course."

The rest of the evening was spent...enjoyably...by both, Nikita and Michael. When she woke up in the morning, he was already gone. She got up, took a quick shower, dressed in tight black pants, a cashmere sweater of the same colour, and a pair of matching black boots, pulling her hair into a ponytail. Coming down the stairs from her bedroom, she smelled something delicious and was shocked beyond words to find Michael still there, cooking breakfast, no less.

"I thought you had left." She said, trying to sound casual.

"No. I wanted to cook for you, and since we never actually got to dinner last night, I make breakfast. I thought that, once we were done with breakfast, we could go see your fortune-teller."

"Uh, that sounds great. What did you make for breakfast?"

"Well, I thought that I might be making breakfast, so I brought some eggs, and other breakfast things. Omlette?" It was all Nikita could do to keep from laughing. The thought of Michael making her breakfast had just suddenly become one of the funniest things in the world to her.

"Thank you, I'd love one." Once again dressed in his black slacks and t-shirt from the night before, Michael took one of the plates from the counter next to him and, with the help of a spatula, slid an omlette onto it. Next he poured her some juice and handed her a fork. Michael repeated this process and took his breakfast to the couch and sat next to Nikita.

Still too amazed to say anything, Nikita just ate, lost in thought. After a few minutes, when they were both done, she took his plate, stacked it on hers, and took both of their glasses to the kitchen.

"Breakfast was wonderful, thank you." She started to do the dishes and clean up the kitchen.

"You're welcome." When she had finished washing the dishes, he dried them and put them back in the cabinets where he had found them.

~I wonder if this is what being married to him would be like,~ Nikita thought absently. Realizing what direction her mind was heading, she dismissed the idea and looked at him brightly. "Should we go now?"

Michael gathered her in his arms one last time and kissed her, all the love he felt for her running into that single kiss. "Sure, let's go." This side of Michael was definitely throwing Nikita off-balance.

Madame Zora didn't seem surprised in the least to see Nikita again-

or Michael. Rather, she seemed to be expecting them. Standing at the entrance to her tent, as they approached her, before either could say a words, she had ushered them inside. Today, there were three chairs, instead of just the two that had been there the day before.

After they had been seated, Nikita felt she had to say something...anything. "Madame Zora, this is my friend, Michael. We were wondering-"

"He is much more than a friend, child. He's the one we spoke of yesterday. Yes, I can see it quite clearly, without even having to consult the cards. He's your other half; the one you are meant to be with." Michael didn't seem to be the least bit shocked at the woman's words, embarassed by what she had just told them, or any of the other things Nikita was feeling at that moment.

"Thank you," were the only words he ever spoke to the woman. That having been said, he took Nikita's hand and led her back out to the street.

"That's it?" Nikita demanded. "She tells us we're meant to be together and we leave? No more questions?"

"She answered the question you asked." He replied calmly.

"But I didn't ask her anything." Nikita lied.

"Yes, you did. You asked her the same question I did. Maybe you didn't say it out loud, but it was obvious that's what you wanted to know. I've known that for a long time, but you had to find it out for yourself."

Things continued on like this for two months. Nikita forgot all about the fortune-teller. Almost every night, Michael would come to Nikita's apartment, they'd have dinner and talk, then sleep together, or, they'd talk, sleep together, then have breakfast. A few times, Michael even talked about Adam, which Nikita thought was a sign that he trusted her.

One day, out of the blue, Madeline called Michael into her office.

"You wanted to see me?" He asked.

"Yes, Michael, have a seat." Michael did as he was told and sat down across the desk from Madeline.

"This has to stop. You and Nikita can no longer see eachother. I'll transfer her to another substation if I have to, but you will stop seeing eachother. Do you understand me?"

"Yes." Then he got up and headed for the door. As he was leaving, Nikita was entering and at seeing one another, they stopped for a split second.

"Come in, Nikita. Have a seat." That was Michael's que to leave. Now, it was Nikita's turn.

Just as Michael had, Nikita sat down in the chair opposite Section's psychological profiler.

"I know about your little affair with Michael, and I think it's gone far enough. He's delt with the loss of his son, and now it's over. You're not to see eachother anymore, but YOU have to convince him of that. He'll defy ME, but he'll listen to you. Let me give you a little motivation. First, we'll take away his status. If that doesn't work, one of you will be transferred, and lastly, one of you will be cancelled. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," was all Nikita could say. It was hard enough to choke out that one word. Getting up, she tried to hide the tears in her eyes, but it was almost impossible. As she walked through the door of Madeline's office, Nikita remembered what the old woman had told her months ago. "It will not last," were her exact words.

That night, Michael came by as usual. Nikita was still quite upset by her conversation with Madeline earlier that day. She assumed that her relationship with Michael had also been the subject of Madeline's confrence with Michael, so she hadn't expected to see him that night.

Nikita opened the door enough to stand in the opening and no more.

"What are you doing here Michael?" She asked, trying to compose herself.

"I'm not staying. I just came to tell you something." He looked into her teary eyes and almost took her in his arms, but he resisted the impulse, as he had so many times before. "We're meant to be together Nikita. This isn't over." And then he kissed her; more tenderly than he ever had before, because it was a kiss filled with, not only love, but loss and heartbreak as well. "It's all in the cards."

End
file.